

The bill would have allowed federal funding only for stem cell lines made from embryos headed for destruction, not adoption. Thus, no lives will be saved by the president's veto.

Further, embryos used in embryonic stem cell research are not human beings—not in any rational sense of the term. These embryos are smaller than a grain of sand, and consist of at most a few hundred undifferentiated cells.

While they have the potential to become human beings—if implanted in a woman's uterus and brought to term—they are nowhere near actual human beings.

No one knows for certain all that can be helped by stem cells. Most scientists believe they hold extraordinary healing powers and may aid everything from brain function impaired by Alzheimer's and Parkinson's to pancreas function limited by diabetes and heart function after a heart attack.

It is revealing that Bush has used his first veto to oppose potentially life-saving research to shore up his support among people who regard destruction of an embryo as abortion.

Anyone who truly cares about human life should condemn this religious assault on medical progress.

Granted, it's difficult to balance the moral, ethical and economic considerations in life sciences research. Elected officials must set policy that is flexible but consistent with historic national values.

But in this case, the president's beliefs and his aim for better poll numbers are preventing research that offers hope to many ailing people.

HONORING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FRENCH VILLAGE FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 13, 2006

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the 60th anniversary of the French Village Fire Department located in St. Clair County, Illinois.

In 1946, residents in the Dutch Hollow and French Village neighborhoods took action to provide fire protection for their communities by forming the French Village Fire Department. Initial funding for this new department came from bake sales and raffles, but they were able to purchase a fire engine from Towers Fire Apparatus in nearby Freeburg, Illinois. The first firehouse was located on a resident's property off Rural Route 5, which is now 2nd Avenue in Fairview Heights.

Raising funds for the department was a struggle during the early years in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Picnics, dances and fish fries were some of the fund-raising activities that were required to keep the department operational. Through an election in 1953, the French Village Fire District was formed. This provided tax revenue so that the fire department could begin to plan for equipment, supplies, and ongoing operations.

In addition to growth in residential property, the early years were also marked by tragedy. In 1952, firemen Frank Robinson and Francis Johnson, Jr., lost their lives when their fire truck was struck while en route to a call. In 1954, another firefighter, Paul Hodson, suffered a fatal heart attack while fighting a vehicle fire. This second tragedy provided the

stimulus for the department to provide better emergency care.

The next decades saw continued growth for the French Village Fire Department. Additional trucks and advanced equipment were added to keep pace with the growing population as well as the new advances in technology.

In the 1980s an effort at the ballot to disband the department was defeated and a bond issue was passed to replace aging equipment and build a second fire station. The 1990s saw the opening of the new station and the department's 50th anniversary. In the new century, the French Village Fire Department continued to expand and improve with the addition of a 75-ft. aerial ladder.

The French Village Fire Department has been a shining example of dedication and professionalism, made possible by the sacrifices that their firefighters and their families have made since 1946. Their compassion, valor, and unselfish acts of courage make each of them an everyday hero.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the 60th anniversary of the French Village Fire Department and to wish the best to them for continued service in the future.

PENSION PROTECTION ACT

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 13, 2006

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, last month President Bush signed into law the so-called Pension Protection Act. I opposed this legislation because it fails to address America's retirement security crisis—in fact, it accelerates the move away from defined-benefit pension plans and it makes it easier for companies to eliminate pensions or dump their obligations onto the backs of taxpayers. It also treats the pensions of CEOs and top executives as more sacred than those of workers.

The Federal Government should ensure that, after 30 years of service, workers will receive the pensions that they have been promised and that they have earned. Unfortunately, this bill does not live up to that responsibility. I opposed this legislation when it originally passed the House, and I had hoped that its shortcomings would be addressed in conference. I am disappointed that Democrats were excluded from the conference committee. This exclusion was a disservice to all American workers who will not benefit from their knowledge and experience in the subject.

Unfortunately, the shortcomings of the House bill were not addressed in conference. Far from protecting pensions for American workers, this legislation will allow companies to under-fund plans by simply promising to increase the contributions in future years. As the financial obligations on these companies grow, however, they will likely freeze or terminate pension plans, as they no longer make business sense to continue.

Some provisions blatantly discriminate against workers in favor of executives. The legislation allows plans that are only 60 percent funded to continue increasing the lavish benefits that executives enjoy. However, a plan must be 80 percent funded before employees can get any additional assistance. It is fundamentally unfair to hold these two groups to two different standards.

Most troubling to me is how American workers and retirees are increasingly being told, "You are on your own." As President Bush continues to advocate privatization of Social Security, and more and more companies convert their defined-benefit pensions to defined-contribution plans, retirees are having the rug pulled from under their feet. We have failed to apply the lesson that broad-based economic security facilitates sustainable growth, innovation, and productivity.

America's employees deserve retirement security. President Bush should have signed a bill that would protect employees, discourage companies from freezing or terminating their plans, address the financial shortfall at the Federal Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation, and treat all employees equally.

Although the "Pension Protection Act" is now law, our commitment to employees who are so integral to our economy is not fulfilled. As we come off of Labor Day, I urge this body to assure the financial security of American employees through policies that achieve economic growth that is broad-based, not concentrated at the top of the income ladder.

NORTH AMERICAN WETLANDS CONSERVATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 12, 2006

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5539, the North American Wetlands Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2006. I would also like to thank Chairman POMBO and Ranking Member RAHALL for all their hard work and for ensuring swift consideration of this important legislation.

As a wildlife enthusiast, conservationist, and member of the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, I am a strong supporter of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). For that reason, I am an original cosponsor of H.R. 5539.

As this body knows, NAWCA is a unique public-private, partnership-based program that leverage non-federal funds to protect, restore and manage wetland habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife. Since it was signed into law in 1989, NAWCA grants have spurred more than 2,000 partners to work on more than 1,100 projects, restoring nearly 23 million acres of wetlands in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

In addition, NAWCA provides an excellent return on a relatively modest federal investment. Over the years, the act has provided approximately \$720 million in grant funds which have been matched by approximately \$2.1 billion in partner funds.

Again, I thank the distinguished chairman of the Resources Committee for introducing this important legislation and look forward to continuing to work with him, Ranking Member RAHALL, members of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus on this extremely successful program.